

Solace/IS Transformation Programme

**Duties & Powers
SCOTS Conference**

22nd May 2026

Purpose of Session

Today's session explores:

- SOLACE / Improvement Service Transformation Programme
- Duties and Powers as a core workstream
- The Duties and Powers Portal
- Opportunities for transformation
- How SCOTS members can help shape this work

SOLACE/IS Transformation Programme

- Aligns with and strengthens broader PSR activity.
- Catalyst for collective action across local government via SOLACE.
- Shaping practical solutions, informing national direction and embedding sustainable improvement across service areas.

SOLACE/IS Transformation Programme

- Ensures local government voices are at centre of shaping public service reform.
- Opportunity for local authorities to influence national direction.
- Clear feedback loop between local authorities and SOLACE - insights inform priorities.
- Ensures councils shape solutions, not just respond to challenges.

Programme Structure

Workstream 1 – Public Service Reform

- Solace agreed narrative for local gov driving change from local government perspective

Workstream 2 – Shorter term projects

- Duties and Powers
- Crerar
- Procurement
- Digital To Be
- Digital Shared Services
- Shared Services

Workstream 3 – Leadership development

- Single Point of Contact (SPOC)
- Leadership Practitioner Forum

Duties & Powers: The 'spine'

Sits at the heart of Transformation Programme and connects strategy to delivery by:

- Clarifying what councils must and can do
- Enabling confident, legally sound decisions
- Supporting service redesign and digital change
- Turning policy ambition into practical delivery

Duties and powers provides the shared spine linking all workstreams and reform activity.

Duties & Powers Discovery Phase Insights

- Eligibility criteria for duties varies across councils
- Services delivered to different standards
- Some legislation no longer aligned with modern practice
- Administrative processes reflect pre-digital systems
- Opportunities exist for efficiency and collaboration

Duties & Powers Portal

A shared national resource for understanding the legislative framework of local government:

- Single, accessible view of duties and powers
- Shared reference point for councils and partners
- Strengthens understanding and surfaces where interpretation varies.
- Live resource that creates basis for moving from *'what must be done'* to *'what could be done differently'*.

Duties & Powers Portal Demonstration

www.dutiesandpowers.scot

Professional Associations: Portal Development

- Shaping and validating content ensuring confidence in accuracy
- Sense-checking to ensure it reflects how legislation works in practice
- Identifying gaps, overlaps and complexity to prioritise areas for refinement
- Improving usability and clarity to refine content for different audiences.

Professional Associations: Transformation

- Relationships and insight are strong basis for ongoing transformation work
- Surfacing complexity and pain points with ongoing dialogue and feedback loops
- Sector-led approach to shaping and validating priorities based on operational reality
- Building a pipeline of practical reform options e.g. service redesign, digital, shared services, legislative reform etc.

SCOTS Engagement

- Strengthen confidence through ongoing validation
- Use insights and sector engagement to identify priorities for transformation
- Ground reform conversations in operational reality
- Use portal as 'as-is' to inform 'to-be' where reform is possible
- Position D&P as longer-term evidence base, not one-off exercise

Wider Engagement

- Participation in collaborative workshop with HOPS, SLAED and ALACHO
- Surfaced shared, cross-service issues rather than isolated problems
- Identified common pain points and early reform opportunities

Key takeaways:

- Strong appetite for continued cross-sector engagement and co-design
- Value in bringing together different service perspectives to shape solutions

What we heard

- Many challenges are system-wide, not service-specific
- Misalignment between national, regional and local roles
- Fragmented digital systems limit data sharing
- Shared services are inconsistent and rely on informal collaboration
- Legislation is complex and not aligned with modern delivery
- Procurement and market constraints affect cost and consistency

Emerging Opportunities

- Clarify roles across the system and develop agreed criteria for delivery level
- Scale shared and regional delivery models building on existing examples
- Create more joined-up digital and data infrastructure e.g. common systems, shared standards, better data sharing, etc
- Use national approaches where they add value
- Modernise legislation to reflect how services operate
- Take coordinated approach to procurement e.g. using national frameworks to improve buying power and reduce variation

Discussion & Questions



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<https://www.menti.com/al5t56117i7k>

Thank You

We welcome your insight and participation in the programme.

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